

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 32-70 and 73-202, and also indicating that claims 4-18 and 20-31 are allowable. By this amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1-3 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, and 170. Claims 4-18, 20-70, and 73-202 are pending and under consideration.

Previously filed Information Disclosure Statement ("IDS"):

The Examiner indicated that the "nonpatent references" listed on an IDS 1449 form, filed March 22, 2004, were unavailable. Applicants note that the Examiner additionally crossed-out the "Foreign Patent Documents" section of the 1449 form, which seems to suggest that the Examiner was not able to access the foreign patent references as well. Accordingly, Applicants re-submit both the eleven (11) foreign patent documents and the sole nonpatent reference to Ning as attachments to this Amendment. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate consideration of these references on the form PTO 1449 submitted with the March 22, 2004 IDS.

Amendments to claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, and 170:

Applicants rewrite claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, and 18 in independent form including all of the elements of the base claim and any intervening claims. Additionally, these amendments incorporate additional language regarding first, second, third, and fourth surfaces to better clarify the structure of certain embodiments of the invention. In

contrast, the amendment to claim 170 merely corrects minor informalities in the preceding set of claims. These amendments add no new matter and do not affect the substance of the disclosure or the scope of the amended claims.

Rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,880,893 to Suganuma, ("Suganuma") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,181,141 to Sato et al. ("Sato") and U.S. Patent No. 4,907,868 to Kitagishi et al. ("Kitagishi"). Office Action at pages 2-4. By this amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1-3 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully assert that this cancellation renders the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-3 moot.

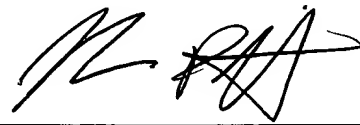
Thus, with the Examiner indicating the that all of the remaining claims are allowable over the cited art, Applicants respectfully assert that this case is in condition for allowance. In response to the Examiner's statement of Reasons for Allowance, Applicants respectfully assert that the cited art fails to teach the combination of all of the claimed features of the allowed claims.

Applicants respectfully request the timely allowance of the pending claims. Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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